



A Message From The Secretary

It's been an exciting summer already and it's just beginning. During the latter part of June, KDHE's management team and I traveled around the state to gather feedback from members of the public including our many stakeholders and our district office employees. We were pleased to see so many of you with whom we work on a regular basis to address health and environmental issues. The feedback was extremely helpful and it was

encouraging to hear about the positive experiences so many have had with our agency in addressing issues and receiving services needed. We also were pleased to hear suggestions on how we can enhance the way we do business, and we look forward to planning our return visit next summer. We encourage you to continue to provide us feedback about how we can serve you better on an ongoing basis. The work we do at KDHE would not be possible without the dedicated public and our partners, as well as our hard working staff.

With the arrival of July, we must focus on protecting ourselves from West Nile Virus (WNV). KDHE received the unwelcome placement of being first in the nation in 2005 to report a human case of WNV to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The case is a probable one meaning the preliminary tests and symptoms indicate the presence of WNV, but additional testing is needed for a state laboratory confirmation. Still, this is an indication that WNV is in Kansas. In the past week, several surrounding states including Missouri and Texas have since reported human cases. With West Nile Virus appearing, we must take steps to protect ourselves by using insect repellent with DEET, wearing protective clothing, limiting outside activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active and removing standing water from our homes. The virus is beginning its fourth year in Kansas and sixth nationally.

KDHE recently announced approximately a million dollars in grant funds available for Kansas businesses and local governments that will enable grantees to enhance their business operations while improving the environment. The funding is available through the KDHE Competitive Plan Implementation Grant Program. This grant provides a way for businesses to develop and enhance programs to reduce waste and to reuse and recycle products that would otherwise go to the landfill. We are encouraged by the many Kansans, including state employees, who are taking the time to reduce, reuse and recycle to protect and preserve our environment and hope many more will join them.

With the memory of the 2003 cryptosporidium outbreak in northeast Kansas still on our minds and the heat of summer leading many of us to think about swimming, it's also time to think about pool safety. KDHE staff has been heavily involved with CDC in recent months working on efforts to prevent recreational water illness (RWI). Swallowing pool water contaminated by an infected person who goes swimming can spread many of the organisms that cause RWI. KDHE recommends those who are sick with these illnesses avoid swimming for two weeks after symptoms subside. CDC and KDHE are working to encourage public health agencies and pool operators around the country and in Kansas to work together to prevent recreational water illness and keep pools safe. Let's do all we can to have a safe and healthy summer in Kansas!

Be Well,